



General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 August 2003

Original: English

Fifty-eighth session

Items 121 and 132 of the provisional agenda*

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Review of duplication, complexity and bureaucracy in United Nations administrative processes and procedures

Note by the Secretary-General

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, 54/244 of 23 December 1999 and 56/253 of 24 December 2001, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit, for the attention of the General Assembly, the attached report, conveyed to him by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, on the review of duplication, complexity and bureaucracy in United Nations administrative processes and procedures.
2. The Secretary-General takes note of the findings set out in the report and concurs with the recommendations for eliminating duplication and improving the efficiency of processes.

* A/58/150.



Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of duplication, complexity and bureaucracy in United Nations administrative processes and procedures

Summary

In its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, to review administrative tasks, procedures and policies with a view to eliminating duplication, and unnecessary and complex bureaucratic procedures and practices within all departments and entities of the Secretariat, and to ensure that the Organization is managed in an integrated manner in order to eliminate duplication.

The team focused on the processes in travel, procurement and the administration of staff entitlements and adopted a consultative approach that sought input from relevant staff across the Organization.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services found that the Secretariat's administrative environment is not fully leveraging the advantages of technology, nor is it applying modern process management practices adopted by other organizations. Many of the administrative processes are still manual, cumbersome, time-consuming, inefficient and costly to administer. In some cases, layers of control slow down the process without providing any real value.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services did note, however, that certain offices have addressed the issue through the development of new processes and that others were at various stages of initiating or planning some effort to change processes in their areas.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services established a steering group named the "Project Management Office", whose existence was limited to the duration of the present review. Relevant stakeholders in the Department of Management and executive officers were invited to participate. The purpose of the Project Management Office was to develop a business case that would form the basis of the recommendations in the present report and address any cross-cutting issues that might arise.

Based on observations, suggestions and ideas generated in the numerous discussions with staff (mainly from the Department of Management), the following recommendations were formulated:

1. Establish a project team with representation from all stakeholders for the purpose of commissioning a detailed requirements analysis for:

(a) Automation of the travel process to provide staff with an electronic travel request form interfaced with the Integrated Management Information System and an electronic travel claim form, which would use data available in the system;

(b) Identification of an organization-wide application for procurement, which would be used at headquarters, offices away from Headquarters and peacekeeping missions;

(c) Further automation of the processes for rental subsidy, education grant and dependency allowances to provide staff with access to their personal details and to electronic forms for applying for entitlements.

2. Streamline the travel process, exempting the claims procedure for travel that did not deviate from the authorized itinerary.
3. Implement an information security and data privacy policy, with administrative instructions making electronic authorizations acceptable for approval and certification.
4. Implement employee self-certification, with a mechanism for random check of supporting documentation for rental subsidy and dependency allowances.
5. Redefine the role of the executive office and the administrative officers in departments and offices.
6. Implement a central project registry for computerized systems.

During the review, some work commenced relating to the preceding recommendations. In the response to the draft report, the Department of Management provided an update of the status of two such initiatives, one being the development of an automated solution for staff members applying for dependency allowances (replacing the manual P.84 form) and the other being the establishment of a group to work on the automation of the education-grant entitlement process.

The Department of Management also launched a task force to review the delegation of authority in the Organization. The task force review will address the definition of the roles and responsibilities of the executive office, as recommended in the present report. The Department of Management also reported that the Information and Technology Services Division had completed the establishment of a central registry for systems (recommendation 6), which is now available on the United Nations Intranet.

Contents

	Paragraphs	Page
I. Introduction	1-2	5
II. Methodology	3-6	5
III. Scope	7-9	5
IV. General observations	10-12	6
V. Detailed observations	13-51	6
A. Manual and duplicative procedures	14-20	6
B. Complex bureaucratic procedures	21-32	8
C. Redefining the role of administrative offices	33-39	10
D. Managing the integration of process improvements	40-48	11
E. Change management	49-51	13
VI. Recommendations	52-66	13

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, to review administrative tasks, procedures and policies with a view to eliminating duplication, and unnecessary and complex bureaucratic procedures and practices within all departments and entities of the Secretariat, and to ensure that the Organization was managed in an integrated manner in order to eliminate duplication.
2. The comments of management were sought on the draft report and were taken into account in the preparation of the final report. Management comments are shown in *italics*.

II. Methodology

3. The Management Consulting Section of the Office of Internal Oversight Services adopted a consultative approach to the assignment, which was designed to include administrative staff from the outset. The Office of Internal Oversight Services recognized that the input and insight that could be gathered from the staff performing administrative duties on a day-to-day basis was essential to the project, as was the need to highlight issues and raise staff members' awareness of the opportunity for improving work methods.
4. The methodology included facilitated workshops for executive officers in the Secretariat as well as interviews and meetings with staff and management in the Department of Management, including the Accounts Division, the Travel and Transportation Service, the Procurement Division and the Office of Human Resources Management. E-mail was used extensively to collect data from staff in offices away from Headquarters.
5. The Office of Internal Oversight Services collected data from administrative offices at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters on processes and procedures that they considered duplicative, bureaucratic and overly complex. The Office of Internal Oversight Services team also canvassed staff for suggestions on how processes or procedures could be changed, enhanced or eliminated to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
6. The Department of Management participated actively in discussions regarding their current and planned process improvement initiatives and in determining the impact of those initiatives and Office of Internal Oversight Services recommendations on the Organization.

III. Scope

7. The project focused exclusively on administrative processes. Substantive areas were excluded from the project scope since they were being addressed by other initiatives of the reform effort.
8. The Office of Internal Oversight Services approach to the General Assembly mandate for the review focused on those administrative areas, which, if streamlined, could result in enhanced organizational productivity. Processes in travel,

procurement and the administration of staff entitlements were selected since they entail high-volume administrative actions that could potentially have the greatest impact on the Organization's operations.

9. While the recommendations made are based on the observations in those three areas, they are relevant to most processes in the Organization that are still not fully automated or that require manual completion of forms. In addition, many of the recommendations suggest new or enhanced organizational policies that would be applicable to all processes.

IV. General observations

10. The review revealed that the administrative environment in the Secretariat did not fully leverage the advantages of technology or apply best practices adopted by other organizations. In fact, some administrative processes were still manual, cumbersome, time-consuming, inefficient and costly to administer. In some cases, layers of control slowed down the process without providing any real value.

11. The Office of Internal Oversight Services did note, however, that certain offices had already addressed the issue by developing new processes and that others were at various stages of initiating or planning some effort to improve their processes. For example, the Office of Human Resources Management had developed an automated recruitment and placement system known as Galaxy, which contained the design for a separate module to facilitate management of staff entitlements and give staff access to their personal records. The Accounts Division had been exploring options to improve the travel reimbursement process and the Procurement Division had been engaged in an ongoing exercise to reform the procurement of goods and services.

12. The present report offers recommendations for improvement related to two critical elements: firstly, the streamlining of processes through automated workflow; and secondly, the implementation of adequate policies to support an automated environment. As a result of the review, implementation of the recommendations would have a significant effect on the elimination of duplication and complexity and would reduce the cost of administering processes in the Organization.

V. Detailed observations

13. The detailed observations in the following paragraphs support the case for change. Notwithstanding the report's focus on the specific processes in travel, procurement and the administration of staff entitlements, the Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that the observations are applicable to other organizational processes that still require the manual completion of forms. The recommendations and associated benefits will, therefore, not be limited to the processes under review.

A. Manual and duplicative procedures

14. The implementation of the Integrated Management Information System has moved the Organization from primarily paper-based transaction processing to

processes that have been partially automated. Full automation however, will only be achieved when the entire workflow can be completed electronically. An inherent part of the current travel, procurement and staff entitlement processes is the manual completion of a form. While most forms that are commonly used in the Organization are now available electronically, they are not integrated into the Integrated Management Information System. Current procedures require that the data on those forms must still be captured in the Integrated Management Information System or on other computerized systems. In addition, procedures often require that the form be printed in order to obtain an authorizing signature.

15. The inefficient use of resources resulting from duplicated effort may be significant, considering the cumulative effect of all the administrative processes in the Organization that require forms to be completed and for which the same data is re-entered into a computerized system. The inefficiency could be even greater when the delays in processing and the errors resulting from inaccurate data entry are factored in.

16. "Upstream data collection" refers to the shift in the responsibility and accountability for accurate data entry to the source or initiator of the transaction. This practice ensures that data is entered directly into the appropriate system by the individual requesting the transaction, thereby reducing the requirement for paper forms, and eliminating the duplication of data entry and the resultant errors from inaccurate data input.

17. In an automated process a transaction is electronically routed through the system in a sequential manner that presents the transaction to the appropriate individual for action, in real time. This electronic workflow saves the time that is usually devoted to physically submitting paper forms for approval or certification to individuals who are often in different locations. Using the electronic workflow, the time required to complete a transaction is not dependent on the physical location or proximity to the approver or certifier.

18. The internal controls required for transactions must be maintained in the electronic workflow. Approval and certification procedures are a mandatory and inherent part of the workflow in administrative processes. In most cases, a physical signature is the only acceptable form of authorization. The requirement of a physical signature as authorization introduces a manual procedure that impedes efforts to fully automate a process. The recognition and acceptance of electronic authorizations is therefore a key element in the process. Organizational policies will need to be implemented to ensure that all the security and procedural elements are adequate to provide the same level of internal control and accountability offered by physical signature authorizations.

19. There is clearly a case for the use of automation to eliminate duplication and streamline processes. The case is further strengthened by instances in which the savings are more tangible. The Office of Internal Oversight Services calculated that pay statements for Secretariat staff were printed and distributed monthly by the Payroll Section at an estimated cost to the Organization of \$88,000 per annum. During the preparation of the present report, the Integrated Management Information System Service and the Payroll Section developed and implemented a solution to distribute pay statements by e-mail, making it possible for staff members to access their monthly pay statements from any location that provides access to their United Nations e-mail account. This obviates the need to print and distribute the pay

statements and has the added advantage of providing staff access to their pay statements even when they are away from their offices.

20. An additional benefit of automation is that, unlike paper, copies do not get lost or misplaced when moving from office to office. An automated audit trail can track authorized transactions by individuals and would enable relevant staff to check the status of their transactions in real time. Information stays with the transaction at each step in the process and can therefore be used to populate new forms, representing significant time savings for administrative staff.

B. Complex bureaucratic procedures

21. Eliminating superfluous steps in a process is another way in which complexity can be reduced. The current travel process, for example, has twenty-nine steps from the initial request to the reconciliation of the entitlements and allowances. The process is complex and over-detailed, and it can result in the inconsistent application of travel rules and delay in the reimbursement of expenses.

22. In 2001, approximately 5,800 travel authorizations were issued by the Secretariat. The Office of Internal Oversight Services noted that in approximately 50 per cent of the transactions, the traveller did not deviate from the itinerary or change the period of travel authorized in the original travel request. Consequently, if the traveller had received tickets and cash advances to cover fully all expenses and subsistence, reconciliation would have resulted in a zero settlement. Currently, since travel advances are not paid in full and the procedure for travel claims is compulsory, the process results in a small settlement, usually for terminal expenses. Considering the effort expended by staff members, executive officers and the Accounts Division in the travel process, as well as the complaints regarding delays in settlement of claims, significant benefit could be derived from improvement. Settlement delays can be attributed to the volume of claims presented to the six General Service staff of the Accounts Division's Travel and Vendor Claims Unit, who analyse and recalculate each claim to determine the correct amount due to, or due by, the traveller. In order to ensure accuracy, they also repeat the verification that the executive office is responsible for.

23. Instances of travel in which there is no deviation from the original travel request present a significant opportunity for eliminating duplication and complexity in the travel process. A procedural change authorizing the programme manager to approve completion of the travel and the Executive Officer to certify compliance with relevant regulations and rules would accomplish this. Using the new procedure and assuming no deviation from the original travel request, the travel process could be finalized within the department or office without the need for a travel claim to be submitted.

24. The recommended change in procedure could eliminate an estimated 50 per cent of the volume of travel claims that are currently submitted to the Travel and Vendor Claims Unit. In addition, the reduction in workload should improve the turnaround time for those travel claims that do need to be submitted.

25. In the administration of staff entitlements, the Office of Internal Oversight Services found that a high volume of transactions, applications and approval processes were labour intensive for both staff and Office of Human Resources

Management personnel. Currently, the Office of Human Resources Management is responsible for entering a staff member's entitlement application into the Integrated Management Information System, checking attached supporting documentation, making copies of documents and filing the application.

26. The Office of Internal Oversight Services analysis of the cost of verifying the staff member's eligibility, checking the supporting documentation, entering data and filing by the administrative staff in the Office of Human Resources Management revealed that the estimated cost per rental subsidy transaction was \$390 and the estimated cost per education grant application was \$340. Manually processing the form for dependency allowances (P.84) for all Headquarters-based staff was estimated at \$537,000 per annum. In total, the administration of staff entitlements by the Office of Human Resources Management costs the Organization an estimated \$1.9 million per annum. That amount is an estimate of the current cost of administration and should not be considered to be total savings. The changes recommended would require some resources to be redeployed to other functions, such as the creation of a unit to perform the checking and monitoring of staff entitlement applications.

27. Efforts by the Office of Internal Oversight Services to benchmark United Nations processes against those of other international organizations showed that in many cases those organizations were experiencing the same issues. The World Bank, however, has implemented changes to their staff entitlements and benefits package, which has reduced their cost of administration. The World Bank model for staff entitlements consolidates the rental subsidy, education grant and dependency allowances into a lump sum amount, which is paid quarterly in arrears. The entitlement is called a "mobility premium" and is designed to encourage and reward staff mobility. The entitlement is reduced on a sliding scale to zero in the tenth year, but the cycle restarts at year one each time the staff member changes duty station.

28. While the mobility premium eliminates the cost of administration and promotes staff mobility, it may increase the Organization's total cost for staff entitlements. If the United Nations were to pursue this option, it would need to work closely with the International Civil Service Commission to study the impact of paying staff entitlements on a lump sum basis.

29. The cost estimates for administering staff entitlements as currently done indicate the impact of implementing an online staff entitlement system. Phasing in procedures that shift the responsibility for the application for entitlements from the administrators in the Office of Human Resources Management to the staff member would further streamline the process.

30. The concept of self-certification places the onus of entering accurate personal data on the staff member. In brief, the self-certification procedure requires a staff member to certify the accuracy of the data being presented in support of an application for an entitlement and retain all relevant supporting documentation. Critical requirements for self-certification would be the policies that support this concept and a system within the Office of Human Resources Management to monitor and audit staff entitlement applications. Criteria for the monitoring and auditing system should be designed to identify certain entitlement applications for immediate inspection and also to select applications randomly so that all staff members would be audited in a given period. In certain respects, automated processes can facilitate monitoring, in that data is more accessible and more easily

sorted and analysed. The system could also be configured to flag exceptions or highlight any violations based on pre-defined criteria.

31. At the same time, however, policies need to be developed to ensure that the Organization has recourse in the event of malfeasance. Once the policies are adopted, it is incumbent upon management to apply the policies consistently to ensure that the Organization is not subject to financial loss.

32. Duplication, complexity and bureaucracy in the Organization's administrative processes also arise from ineffective internal control procedures, which may add more to the cost of processing than the amount of the risk they are intended to mitigate. The impact of self-certification on processes is significant; however, given the considerable risk in the education grant entitlement, for example, the Office of Internal Oversight Services does not recommend that self-certification be applied to that process initially. The challenge is to find the optimal balance between efficiency and controls, which would ultimately minimize risk to the Organization.

C. Redefining the role of administrative offices

33. Under the current system, the executive offices and administrative units in the offices away from Headquarters are pivotal in the processing of many administrative actions. However, increased automation and increased delegation of authority should reduce the level of involvement required from individual administrative officers and, therefore, expand their role from purely administrative oversight to include other services. In addition, recommended changes to processes will shift the data-input activity to the staff member initiating the transaction. Staff currently performing this activity in the Executive Offices or administrative units could be redeployed to other roles. Identifying their new roles would require further assessment by the Department of Management.

34. Redeployment of administrative staff to other activities, particularly if they were programmatic, would reduce the size of the administrative organization. In March 1997, the Secretary-General committed the Organization to a reduction in its administration and non-programme costs from an estimated 38 per cent of the regular budget to 25 per cent by 2001. While a direct comparison using the 1996 basis for the calculation cannot be accurately performed owing to subsequent restructuring, the Office of Internal Oversight Services has estimated that administration and non-programme costs accounted for 22 per cent of the 2002-2003 regular budget. That figure includes the total appropriations to the Department of Management and the administrative and programme support costs of all United Nations departments and offices as listed in the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/6/Add.2).

35. There are significant opportunities for further delegation of authority to programme managers and for change in the structure of administrative support services in the departments and offices. Their role is exercised with slight differences. Some departments and offices delegate more authority to the programme managers for approval of administrative transactions and hold programme managers accountable for expenditures and budgets. Others adopt an approach requiring programme managers to submit individual transactions to the executive office for certification and approval, thereby introducing an additional

level of review, duplicating the role of the programme manager and undermining the substantive basis for the transaction.

36. The Office of Internal Oversight Services recommends that the role of the executive office be defined more specifically in view of changes to processes that will rely on the accountability and delegated authority of the programme manager for substantive decisions. Those changes should eliminate duplication, streamline processes and keep the focus on the activity and content of the mission rather than on the process.

37. Duplication can be further eliminated by consolidating the delivery of common support services, which may currently be duplicated in many areas of the Organization, into central regional agencies. The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that centralizing services such as job application processing, staff entitlements and payroll would eliminate duplication and increase cost-effectiveness and efficiency, particularly for offices away from Headquarters and peacekeeping missions. Centralizing service delivery in certain areas would also realize economies of scale and leverage specialized skills.

38. The preceding model for centralization does not imply less delegation of authority to the programme managers. The authority to make decisions and approve transactions can continue to be delegated to appropriate levels in the Organization, while centralizing only the actual delivery of services. However, centralizing delivery of administrative support services depends on some key elements, including:

- Automation of processes
- Consolidation of the Integrated Management Information System databases, and real-time access to data across all duty stations
- Clear definition of the terms of service-level agreements

39. *The Department of Management, in its response to the draft report, pointed out that centralizing the delivery of common services was a major shift that would have implications for the allocation of the budget and human resources across organizational units and duty stations, and that consideration of those issues should not be overlooked.*

D. Managing the integration of process improvements

40. The most important issue in the development or enhancement of systems and processes is the recognition that the Organization needs to be more strategic and adopt an enterprise-wide approach that is designed to meet the needs of the entire Organization rather than just a department. The integrated automation of travel, procurement and administration of staff entitlements processes are specific examples of how the Organization can develop more efficient and cost-effective administrative mechanisms while simplifying processes and reducing the risk of errors.

41. The Office of Internal Oversight Services established a steering group named the Project Management Office, whose tenure was limited to the duration of the present review. Relevant stakeholders in the Department of Management and in executive offices were invited to participate. The role of the Project Management

Office was to develop a business case that would form the basis of the report's recommendations and address any cross-cutting issues that might arise.

42. The Project Management Office was unanimous in its support for a coordinated and consolidated approach to the implementation of process improvement recommendations that would ensure the following:

- That an organization-wide view of the implementation would be taken when decisions regarding priority of activities were made
- That synergies in the development process would be maximized to reduce project costs
- That the systems designed would be scalable, portable and capable of interfacing with the Integrated Management Information System, which is the United Nations official record-keeping system, and that they would be aligned with the Organization's information and communications technology strategy
- That consolidated information systems would allow access to data across all duty stations and that applications, when implemented, would have the same "look and feel" and facilitate ease of training.

43. The collaborative approach to enterprise-wide system development, as demonstrated by the activities of the Project Management Office, is a major accomplishment. If departments were to approach implementation individually, there would be a risk that the design would only meet the requirements of the department sponsoring the development, thereby missing the opportunity to build an application that would integrate all the systems in the Organization. The joint approach has the further advantage of establishing a more comprehensive and compelling case for the resources required.

44. The Office of Human Resources staff selection system, "Galaxy", for example, is a sound concept that was developed without additional resources. The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that Galaxy could have been a superior application, particularly in terms of its integration with existing systems, if the initial project design had been approached with an enterprise-wide perspective.

45. The replacement of the Organization's procurement systems could become a test of the concept for this approach. There are currently two procurement applications in the Organization: one used by Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters, and the other used by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and in peacekeeping missions. In addition, the procurement application in every location has a separate database, which has resulted in as many vendor databases and catalogues.

46. In focus group meetings the Procurement Division articulated its vision for an organization-wide procurement system that would eliminate the duplication of vendor databases and provide data for improved procurement decisions. While the Procurement Division and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would be the main users of an organization-wide procurement system, other considerations, such as the interface with the Integrated Management Information System, make it imperative that any initiative to identify an organization-wide procurement system include all the stakeholders.

47. Although there are development initiatives in progress — namely, the Office of Human Resources Management Galaxy e-Benefits module designed for the administration of staff entitlements and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations planned development of a field-based procurement system — the developers should be aware of the need for an Organization-wide solution.

48. The business case of the Project Management Office recommended that a needs analysis be conducted as a first step to the development of new systems, particularly for procurement and staff entitlements. The needs analysis would ensure selection of the best solution and identify in detail the technology and associated cost of implementation. It would also enable a proper cost-benefit analysis and provide a quantitative basis for making decisions regarding implementation.

E. Change management

49. Interviews with both staff and management revealed that reform initiatives to streamline processes had been attempted several times in the past, but few significant process changes resulted. Others commented on the resistance to change in the Organization.

50. The Office of Internal Oversight Services reviewed prior efforts to re-engineer processes, particularly the work of the Efficiency Board as reported in 1996, and found that several of the change and improvement initiatives listed in the report under illustrative projects were not implemented. The Office of Internal Oversight Services research provided evidence that, in several cases, competing priorities for limited resources and the demands of the programme of work were responsible for the lower priority of the efficiency projects. In addition, at that time no strong guidance or steering committee was present to monitor the implementation of reform initiatives.

51. The implementation of the recommendations is as much an exercise in changing processes and implementing new procedures and systems as it is an exercise in getting staff members to accept the changes as beneficial to them. The effort to implement process improvements must provide for this when establishing the project and ensure that adequately skilled change management resources are available to the project team.

VI. Recommendations

52. The recommendations that follow are in many instances based on ideas that have emerged from consultations with management and staff in the Department of Management.

53. The Department of Management should establish a project team consisting of representatives from the Information and Communications Technology Board, the Management Policy Office, the Travel and Transportation Section, the Travel and Vendor Claims Unit, the Office of Human Resources Management, the Information and Technology Services Division, the Integrated Management Information System Service, and the Procurement Division, for the purpose of commissioning a detailed needs analysis.

54. *The Department of Management believes that rather than creating another group to implement this recommendation, it should become the priority of the Department of Management's Information and Communications Technology Committee.*

55. The needs analysis should identify the best technology options and funding requirements for implementing the following recommendations:

(a) Automate the travel process to provide staff with an electronic travel request form interfaced with the Integrated Management Information System and an electronic travel claim form, that would use data available in the system;

(b) Identify an Organization-wide application for procurement, which would be used at Headquarters, offices away from Headquarters and peacekeeping missions. The system must provide online requisitioning, an electronic catalogue and a single central vendor database;

(c) Further automate the processes for rental subsidy, education grant and dependency allowances to provide staff with access to their personal details and electronic forms for applying for entitlements (MC-03-001-001).*

56. *The Department of Management agreed with the recommendations to automate the travel process, identify an Organization-wide procurement system and enhance the staff entitlement system to provide staff with an online application facility and electronic validation of eligibility.*

57. *However, before automating the processes, the Department of Management will perform a review of the underlying policies and rules. The review should result in the documentation of business processes and form the basis of the new system to be developed. Work has already been done in the area of dependency benefits, and a report on amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules will be submitted to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly recommending the removal of the requirement that staff submit dependency allowance applications annually and in writing.*

58. The Department of Management should issue an administrative instruction to introduce the following changes to the procedure for finalizing travel that did not deviate from the authorized itinerary:

(a) The programme manager should be authorized to approve valid travel completed for values up to the specified limit of his/her authority;

(b) The executive officer must certify compliance with relevant regulations and rules (MC-03-001-002).

59. *The Department of Management fully supports this recommendation. The Department of Management suggests that since travel advances and travel claims are processes within the purview of the Accounts Division, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts should take the lead in this regard.*

* The symbols in parentheses in the present section refer to an internal code used by the Office of Internal Oversight Services for recording recommendations.

60. The Department of Management should issue an administrative instruction on information and communications technology security and data privacy to ensure that specific guidelines are given to all staff for the management of user identities and passwords. The administrative instruction should establish the validity of electronic approval and the accountability that derives from it (MC-03-001-003).

61. *The Department of Management agrees with the recommendations to issue applicable instruments in setting out policies on security and data privacy, as well as the basis for appropriate electronic approvals and the accountability mechanism arising from those procedures.*

62. The Department of Management should issue an administrative instruction detailing the processes that will be subject to staff self-certification. The administrative instruction should also specify the following:

(a) The statement of statutory declaration that the staff members will be required to sign;

(b) That documentation will be liable to audit at any time and that it is the Organization's right to audit the documentation at a later date;

(c) That documentation must be provided by the staff member on demand and within a specified period of time;

(d) The consequences for staff for non-compliance (MC-03-001-004).

63. *The Department of Management agrees with this recommendation and will determine a more appropriate way to go: for example, whether to issue a general administrative instruction on staff self-certification, as suggested, or introduce and explain the certification process in the administrative instructions governing the specific entitlements. This will allow staff to read only one administrative instruction, rather than two: an administrative instruction on the education grant or the rental subsidy, and then another on the manner in which they should proceed.*

64. The Department of Management should take steps to redefine the role of the executive office and the administrative officers in departments and offices to reflect the changes resulting from procedural improvements and increased delegation of authority to the programme manager (MC-03-001-005).

65. *The Department of Management agrees with the recommendation, and it is being addressed in the context of the review of the delegation of authority. It is expected that the review will redefine the role of the Department of Management and related offices such as the executive offices.*

66. The Department of Management should take steps to prevent further duplication of computerized systems in the Organization by doing the following:

(a) Creating and maintaining a central registry for systems;

(b) Instructing departments and offices to submit proposals for new systems development projects to the Information and Communications Technology Board for approval;

(c) Making the registry accessible to all staff through the Intranet (MC-03-001-006).

67. *The Department of Management has already made substantial progress with the implementation of this recommendation. A central registry for systems has already been implemented; the draft information and communications technology review committee terms of reference have been prepared; and a central registry for systems is currently available on the Intranet.*

(Signed) Dileep Nair
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services